

Collection of passport Applications through postal department

1274. SHRI KARNENDU BH ATTACH ARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have started collecting passport applications through Postal Department in the States to help the passport seekers; and

(b) if so, whether such arrangements have been made in the North-Eastern Region also particularly in Assam and how many such centres for collection of applications are working in the North-Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Though, at present, this facility is not available in the North-Eastern Region, it has been decided to open ten such centres in the North-Eastern Region in the coming year.

Inquiry into intrusion of Bangladesh Rifles

1275. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any report from the Government of Bangladesh on the findings of the inquiry into the unprovoked and unwarranted intrusion by Bangladesh Rifles Forces into Meghalaya and brutal and inhuman killing of BSF personnel;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what action Government have taken to pursue the case further with Bangladesh Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government has pursued the matter through diplomatic channels.

Outcome of U.N. meet on racism and racial discrimination

1276. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM:

SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent UN meet on racism and racial discrimination etc., held in Durban failed to take note of the discrimination suffered by the

socially and economically backward classes, including the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minorities in different part of the country (India);

(b) if so, what steps were taken by Government to highlight such maladies in the conference; and

(c) how far and in what terms the Indian view was accommodated in the declaration adopted at the conference?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) and (b) The UN General Assembly had decided *vide* its resolution 52/111 of December 1997, that the theme of the Third World Conference, held in Durban from August 30th—September 8th, 2001, should be Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Discrimination based on grounds unrelated to this theme, *e.g.* discrimination based on social and economic backwardness, was not on the agenda of the Durban Conference.

(c) India's consistent and principled view has been that racism is an affront to human dignity and anathema to the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and needs to be rejected unequivocally. Every effort should be made to ensure faithful implementation of the internationally accepted obligation to prevent and eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, reflected in the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Durban World Conference.

Suspension of Samjhauta Express

† 1277. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Samjhauta Express running between India and Pakistan has become a main source of smuggling and whether Government proposed to suspend Samjhauta Express on experimental basis to check the smuggling to a greater extent; and

(b) if so, till when and if not, the reasons therefor and the manner by which Government would check the smuggling taking places through this way?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) and (b) Presently, there is no proposal for suspension of Samjhauta Express between India and Pakistan.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.